

Deliverable Action F1. Informe Anual de la Gestión del Proyecto (II).

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MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

The general objective of the CONVIVE LIFE project is to improve the conservation status of habitats and species of community interest, through the implementation of actions evidencing the ecological and functional restoration (hydrodynamic), which allow to guarantee the environment sustainability through the promotion of the **COEXISTENCE** of the preservation elements of Red **NATURA 2000** with the development of different anthropic uses: cultural-educational, tourist and productive.

This global objective can be broken down into five specific objectives:

- Restore a favourable conservation status of some estuarine habitats of community interest of Red NATURA 2000 of Cantabria.
- Reduce direct pressure on biological diversity, hence improving the conservation status of estuarine habitats and species of community interest, sensitive to those pressures.
- Promote the sustainability of productive, educational-cultural and tourist activities development in estuarine systems, minimizing its effects and promoting the preservation of the biodiversity within these ecosystems.
- Improve the actions development of estuarine ecological restoration in the Atlantic Biogeographical Region, promoting a participative planning approach, knowledge management and results dissemination.
- Improve the estuarine marine bird life habitat conservation status on the whole of Red Natura 2000 coastal area of Cantabria, through the design and drafting of an inundation management plan on coastal lagoons (both natural and anthropic)

The project is being developed in four estuaries (Tina Menor, Oyambre, Joyel and Victoria), which are integrated in two different SAC (ES1300003 and ES1300007) and one SPA (ES0000143).

Four species and eight community interest habitats are targeted by the project. The birds *Platalea leucorodia*, *Ardea purpurea*, *Recurvirostra avosetta* and *Ixobrychus minutus*, all of them protected by the Bird Directive (Dir. 2009/147/CE), are involved in the project through the improvement of the conservation status of their habitats and the upgrading of the information for the evaluation of their own conservation status. The community interest habitats 1110, 1130, 1140, 1150*, 1310 and 1320 will improve their conservations status through the remove of anthropogenic pressures (e.g. hydrodynamic barriers, the non-native species *Baccharis halimifolia* and macroalgae opportunistic species). Moreover, the habitats 1330 and 1420, which nowadays are in a non-favourable status, will be restored in a good conservation status.

The expected results are:

- Restoration of a favourable conservation status of the 1330 and 1420 community interest habitats (currently not favourable), on the NATURA 2000 network of Cantabria by the elimination of 17.3 ha of *Baccharis halimifolia* that currently occupy the potential niche of those community interest habitats.
- Improvement of the 1110 community interest habitats conservation status (*Sandbanks permanently covered with marine water in shallow waters*), 1130 (*Estuaries*), 1140 (*mudflats or sandflats not covered with water in low tide*), 1310 (*Annual pioneering vegetation with Salicornia and other species*

from muddy and sandy areas) and 1320 (Grasslands of *Spartina*) on the whole of NATURA 2000 network of Cantabria by the elimination of hydrodynamic pressures (e.g. dikes). The removal of the hydrodynamic barriers allows to control the proliferation of the non-native species *Baccharis halimifolia* and, furthermore, the improvement of the conservation status of 30 ha of community interest habitats, which nowadays are suffering alterations in the flowing dynamics.

- Improvement of the marine bird life habitat conservation status, with special emphasis on the habitat to the species of community interest *Platalea leucorodia* (Spatula), *Ardea cinerea* (Grey Heron) y *Ardea purpurea* (Purple Heron), through the elimination of pressures to which these are sensitive and the design of a water level management plan in the coastal lagoons.
- Update of the community interest species inventory in the NATURA 2000 spaces in the coastal area of Cantabria not integrated, completing the declaration official forms of the SAC.
- Restoration of the favourable connectivity state in the Oyambre estuary (SAC ES1300003) by means of the removal of the dike that currently restrains the tidal flow.
- Improvement in the connectivity of the Joyel estuary (SAC ES1300007, ZEPA ES0000143), achieving compatibility between the cultural and ethnographic heritage conservation, in this case the Santa Olaja mill, and keeping good habitats conservation status and community interest species.

It is important to note that this project is being developed in estuarine systems that are managed by several administrations and private companies (like the fish farm Naturix S.L. in Tina Menor estuary). Thus, the Government of Cantabria, through the DG Environment and Fishing, is involved in the management of the study sites and the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Environment of the Spanish government, through the Coastal Authority, is involved due to its public role in the management of the public maritime-terrestrial domain of the coastal and estuarine areas. The participation of so many administrations in the management of these spaces hinders the development of some concrete actions. Nevertheless, it is possible to achieve the goals of the CONVIVE project following the appropriate administrative procedures.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Along 2017, all the actions scheduled in the first years of the project (2015, 2016 and 2017) have been initiated.

The preparatory actions (A) are all completed. Most of them were finished according to schedule, except for action 3, which suffered a short delay.

For **Action A1** the initial cartographies of the habitats, vegetation and the invasive alien species *Baccharis halimifolia* have been developed as well as the characterization of the biological communities.

Action A2 included the characterization of the hydrodynamic and morphology initial scenario by the collection of source data and field works, and the definition and calibration of the numeric models. In Oyambre and Joyel, changes in the hydrodynamic and morphology under different scenarios of hydrodynamic restorations were analyzed. Results helped in the definition of the final alternatives of the construction projects (action A3).

Action A3 has had a slight scheduling delay, except for the construction project of the Capitan Dike (Oyambre) which was completed according to schedule. The construction projects for the hydrodynamic recovery of the Santa Olaja Mill lagoon (Joyel) and the Soano lagoon (Joyel) suffered a delay and were completed in May, 2017. In the second case, an alternative solution to the reconstruction of Soano dike flapgate was proposed due to the difficulties in its reconstruction. The improvement of the seabed conditions of an old channel (Joyel channel) that connected in the past the Soano Lagoon with the estuary,

and the rehabilitation of the regulation of the water flow through the installation of a lock-gate was proposed in the construction project. Finally, the construction project of the green filter was delayed to September 2017, due to the acquisition of the fish farm by Naturix S.L. The delay of the construction projects did not affect the objectives of the project nor the associated action plans (A4, C1 and C2). All the construction projects are included in a deliverable.

With regards to **action A4**, the environmental impact study of the removal of the Ría del Capitán Dike has been drafted, according to schedule (April, 2017). According to the laws in force, the remaining recovery actions do not require an environmental impact study to be developed as they are classified under infrastructure maintenance work. After analysing the environmental impact study of the Capitan Dike, the competent Authority (Consejería de Medio Ambiente), considered that there was no need to go through an administrative environmental impact evaluation.

The concrete conservation actions (C) are on schedule, except for C2, which is suffering a delay.

Action C1 was started in 2017. The control of the invasive alien species *Baccharis halimifolia* started during summer 2017 in Tina Menor and Ría del Capitán (Oyambre), where around 1,58 ha of *Baccharis* have been treated in an estuarine area of 5,60 ha (3,82 ha in Tina Menor and 1,78 ha in Oyambre). In autumn, *Baccharis halimifolia* was treated in Victoria and Joyel estuaries.

Action C2 was delayed. The restoration of the conservation state in Santa Olaja mill dike was carried out on October 2017. *Ría del Capitán restoration* is delayed due to the need to obtain the concession of the ría del Capitán dike. The Municipality of Valdáliga assumed the responsibility to request the concession and the administrative process is on going. *Joyel Channel restoration* action is also delayed due to administrative procedures (an authorization/concession to occupy the maritime-terrestrial public domain was requested by Coastal Authority, which is the public body in charge of this domain). In this case, ARNUERO assumed the responsibility to request the authorization and the administrative process will be finished on January 2018. ARNUERO and the Board of the Natural Park Marismas de Santoña, Joyel y Victoria agreed to manage the control of the lock-gate.

All the procedures have started in Coastal Authority (documents in Annex III. Technical dossier. IIIA3 of Mid-Term Report) and the restoration actions will start as soon as the Municipalities get the permits from Coastal Authority (delayed to the beginning of 2018).

Action C3 is in progress. Green filter installation in Tina Menor fish farm was foreseen to start on January 2018. The first green algae removal in Santa Olaja was carried out on October 2017 (to coincide with the works in Santa Olaja mill dike).

Management plans definition (**action C4**) is delayed. A second draft of the Biodiversity management plans was presented to the project partners and to the Cantabria Government. These drafts need to be agreed and approved by the Board of the Natural Park Marismas de Santoña, Joyel y Victoria (Joyel and Victoria plans) and by Naturix S.L. (Tina Menor Plan).

The Monitoring of the impact actions (D) are going according to the proposal's schedule.

Action D1 and D2 monitoring program was planned and the environmental assessment started with the restoration works (November 2017).

Actions D3, D4 and D5 have started and are well underway. For **action D3**, the selection of the goods and services and the quality methods to assess them have been established. **Action D4** surveys to know the

social perception of the estuaries before the project actions have been completed. **Action D5** indicator selection was also completed in 2016. All indicators were measured during 2016 and 2017.

The Public awareness and dissemination actions (E) are also going according to schedule.

In order to relate the acquired experience in the restoration works to the general public, the action E2 was delayed to October 2017. The technical session was carried out in October 26th, 2017. **Actions E1, E6 and E7** did not start according to schedule and **Action E3** is going according to schedule. 185 elementary and middle school students from the Municipalities of Arnuero, Meruelo and Valdaliga have attended CO-EDUCA workshops during 2016 and 2017. On the other hand, the programme of the field work has been also completed and it was developed on November 23-26th 2017. **Action E4** was completed in October 2017. Finally, **action E5** is still going on schedule. Notice boards are installed in all the areas, leaflets printed and being distributed amongst the general public, website is updated, and 2016 and 2017 bulletins and summary of the actions can be downloaded from the website. The logo, annual bulletin and dissemination material are available in its corresponding section on the website.

The Project management actions (F) are going on schedule.

Action F1 manages the whole project, is producing the documents required by EASME on time and is assisting periodically the partners with all their requirements. **Action F2** may experience a delay, but it was started by the participation in the LIFE Platform meeting on Invasive Alien Species celebrated in Milan (29-30th November, 2017). Moreover, two Natura 2000 sites in Portugal (ría de Aveiro) and the Netherlands (Scheldt estuary) have been selected and partners in both sites have been contacted (Coimbra University and NIOZ, respectively) to help organize the visits to the sites. These sites will be visited on January and March 2018. **Actions F3 and F4** have not started yet, according to the proposal timetable.

3. ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION

3.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

Coordination and difficulties encountered:

Regarding **internal management**, a Coordination Committee Project (CCP) has been established since the project's start and it is composed of a representative of each associated beneficiary. This Committee has organized four meetings (see table below) during this year (2017) with the purpose of efficiently coordinating the implementation of the project and have also organized and monitored all the technical aspects and the progress of the actions. Beside these meetings, other three meetings have been celebrated to set up criteria for the financial development of the project for certain beneficiaries (ARNUERO and AC) in order to explain the financial and administrative aspects and clarify all the questions and doubts emerged during the process of certification of costs.

In general terms, the coordination of the project has been effectively undertaken particularly through continuous emails between the coordinator and associated beneficiaries since the start (October 2015) and the prompt meetings taken place to deal with administrative, financial and technical issues as shown in the next table:

EVENT	PLACE	TIME	PARTICIPANTS	DOCUMENTS attached as annexes
Management Committee Meeting	IHCantabria premises.	13 th February 2017	All partners (except SEO)	Minutes
Management Committee Meeting	IHCantabria premises.	09 th May 2017	All partners	Minutes
Neemo visit	IHCantabria premises.	5-6 th June 2017	All partners	Minutes
Management Committee Meeting	IHCantabria premises.	23 th October 2017	All partners	Minutes

Administrative-Financial Management Meeting	IHCantabria premises	16 th May 2017	AC/FIHAC	N/A
Administrative-Financial Management Meeting	IHCantabria premises	26 th May 2017	ARNUERO/FIHAC	N/A
Administrative-Financial Management Meeting	IHCantabria premises	1 st June 2017	AC/FIHAC	N/A

The main problems encountered during the year 2017 are related to: a) the delay in the reception of the documentation requested to ARNUERO associated beneficiary with a shortage of administrative personnel associated to the project and, b) the delay in the validation of the Partnership Agreement by the CGPYDR associated beneficiary which in turn, caused a delay on the start of the conservation actions as it is stated in the technical part of Mid-Term Report. The Coordinator beneficiary has made all the possible efforts to solve this inconvenient through several contacts via meetings, official reminders and even a request letter sent on February 2017 to the Director of Natural Environment appealing urgently to resolve as soon as possible this matter.

Moreover, and relating to the **administrative and technical management**, the daily follow-up of the project level has been done through continuous emails and phone calls between the coordinator beneficiary and associated beneficiaries dealing with deadlines, specific information on variations, amendments, notifications from the auditors or EASME etc. In addition to that, other specific actions have

been launched during the coordination of relevant meetings with associated beneficiaries, regional public authorities and certain suppliers. This is the case of actions E3 and E5.

The tables below show the list of all coordination meetings with suppliers and stakeholders and other interested parties who have been involved in the development of the project during 2017.

Meetings with suppliers:

Date	Place	Participants	Objective
13/04/2017	IHCantabria	FIHAC/C&C comunicación	Dissemination activities
27/09/2017	IHCantabria	FIHAC/C&C comunicación	Dissemination activities

Coordination Meetings with stakeholders and interested partners:

Date	Place	Participants	Objective
16/01/2017	IHCantabria	FIHAC/COPSESA	Construction Projects
30/01/2017	IHCantabria	FIHAC/AC/COPSESA	Senda Oyambre
24/01/2017	Demarcación de Costas	Biodiversidad/COPSESA/FIHAC/Costas	Joyel and Oyambre Interventions
13/02/2017	Joyel	Arnuero/COPSESA/FIHAC	Santa Olaja Mill and Joyel Gutter Visit
16/02/2017	Tina Menor	Naturix/COPSESA/AC/FIHAC/ Microalgae	Green Filter
22/02/2017	IHCantabria	AC/FIHAC/COPSESA	Green Filter
27/02/2017	Valdáliga	FIHAC/COPSESA/Ayto. Valdáliga	Oyambre Dike Intervention
28/02/2017	Joyel	COPSESA	Santa Olaja Mill Visit
10/03/2017	Tina Menor	Naturix/COPSESA/AC/FIHAC	Green Filter
14/03/2017	Camargo	AC/ Ría	Green Filter
23/03/2017	Consejería de Medio ambiente	Medio Ambiente/FIHAC	EIA
24/03/2017	IHCantabria	FIHAC/COPSESA/AC	Green Filter
07/04/2017	Camargo	AC/Ría	Green Filter
19/04/2017	Tina Menor	AC/Ría/Naturix	Green Filter
15/05/2017	Consejería de Ganadería	SEO/Biodiversidad/FIHAC	Biodiversity Management Plans
16/05/2017	IHCantabria	Naturix/COPSESA/AC/FIHAC/Ría	Green Filter
16/05/2017	Valdáliga	FIHAC/Ayto. Valdáliga	Oyambre Dike Intervention

01/06/2017	IHCantabria	AC/FIHAC	CONVIVE NATURA Tec. Sessions
19/09/2017	Demarcación de Costas	Biodiversidad/COPSESA/FIHAC/Arnuelero/ Costas	License for Joyel and Tina Menor Gutter Interventions
11/10/2017	IHCantabria	COPSESA/ AC/ FIHAC/ Naturix S.L./ Asociación Ría	Green Filter

Contractualisation process:

As we know by the previous Annual Report, one of the associated beneficiaries – Tinamenor S.L. was replaced by another organization called Aves Cantábricas S.L. The official letter from EASME (ARES (2016)2092133) validating the approval of AC as an official associated beneficiary and requesting the signature for the new Grant Agreement was received on 8th March 2017. After this reception, the Coordinator sent a copy signed of the new GA to EASME.

Provision of documentation:

Most of the beneficiaries provided financial and administrative documents (timesheets, payment slips, invoices, etc.) on a termly basis (quarterly). However, in the case of ARNUERO, due to their profile of Public Administration and a shortcoming in the administrative procedures there were occasional delays.

Regarding the proof of payment of invoices, all the beneficiaries sent this documentation regularly.

External Monitor's visit (5-6th June 2017)

The monitoring visit from the external team was in June. During the first day, a presentation was made showing an overview of the state of development of the actions. Moreover, the external monitoring team presented some useful tips relating the elaboration and delivery of Mid-Term Report delivered on November 2017. As a result of the visit, a letter was received from the Project Officer of EASME Agency (ARES (2017)3711864-24/07/2017), with recommendations and shortcomings to face and solve regarding the financial and administrative issues.

Most of the indications provided by EASME were successfully solved except for some that are being difficult to solve on the short term due to the delays on the administrative process of Public Administrations with the consequent delay on the starting of the relevant conservation actions of the project.

Outline of actions undertaken to resolve the conflicts:

- According to point 7 (Financial issues) of EASME's notification mentioned above, the associated beneficiary AC has corrected the internal codes for the accountability of the project in their accounting system with the aim of dividing the costs related to the project with those related to the others projects involved. In this sense, the CGPYDR associated partner has not provided this document yet due to a delay in the start of the activities and they have provided a notification, which states the reasons for this delay.
- Concerning point 8 of the letter regarding the "invoices and proofs of payment", we have remarked to the associated beneficiaries that they should ensure the traceability by marking the invoices with the official CONVIVE-LIFE stamp. In this sense, the proof of payments will be highlighted in order to follow the audit trail and facilitate the verification and certificate works. Regarding the stating of the

- invoice code on each proof of payment, we stressed this matter to all partners, however some partners have shown difficulty in managing this since their internal protocols limit this type of task.
- In relation to “timesheets” (point 9 of EASME letter), the AC associated beneficiary has duly corrected their timesheets with the signature of one supervisor (different from Alejandro as an employee) that confirms the verification of the hours devoted to the project for that person. In this sense, the same notification was put forward to the rest of the partners (CGPYDR, COPSESA, SEO) which did not identify the supervisor in their timesheets.
 - About point 11 of the letter mentioning the “compliance with the 2% rule for public bodies”, ARNUERO associated beneficiary has been requested to provide a certificate stating the potential “additional personnel” assigned to the project once they estimate the people to contract for the activities foreseen. In this sense, and relating the point 12 of the letter, the CGPYDR associated partner has been warned to provide a duly certificate in case there is “additional personnel” assigned to the project and to correct the classification of their categories as a permanent employee.
 - As regards point 13 of the letter, the CGPYDR and ARNUERO associated beneficiaries were duly requested to provide a VAT certificate issued and certified by a duly competent Authority. In this sense, the CGPYDR associated partner have not provided this document due to delay on the validation of the partnership agreement and the corresponding start of the activities. In relation to ARNUERO associated beneficiary, the VAT certificate was duly provided and signed by a certifying officer of the Council.

Communication with the monitoring team:

- The communication with the monitoring team is permanent in order to solve the doubts and problems, which emerged during the compliance of the work and the reporting tasks. The feedback is excellent and fast due to their experience in managing these kind of projects.

3.2 SPECIFIC ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIONS

Action F1. General management of the project

Progress: The progress of this action is being developed by all the beneficiaries according to schedule.

Regarding the **administrative and financial aspects of the project**, the associated partners were duly assessed about the tools to use in order to account and manage the activities and the participation of the people involved. Moreover, with the aim of maintaining the correct costs accounted it was decided that, every three months, the associated beneficiaries should send the coordinator partial financial reports to control the entire project’s costs.

As regards the technical and scientific management, the way to monitor the correct development is done during the celebration of yearly CCP meetings. Under these meetings, all the partners had the opportunity to show all the activities where they were involved in order to describe all the technical aspects related to their involvement and put in common the barriers and problems encountered during their management. Once listed and analysed the problems, the Committee established all the correct solutions in order to avoid the deviations caused by the changes and improve the upgrade of the activities.

Action F2. Link build-ups with other projects.

Progress: The progress of this action is delayed according to schedule but the action will be completed on time.

Survey process: The “Survey on the interaction of activities in coastal spaces of the Natura 2000 network” was designed by FIHAC and translated into 4 languages (Spanish, English, French and Portuguese). The access to the surveys was limited to invitation, so only the managers who were invited can access it.

The survey was sent in February 2016 by email to the managers of the Natura 2000 network sites of the Atlantic Biogeographic region including estuaries. Specifically, emails were sent to the managers of different sites of the Natura 2000 network in Germany, Belgium, Holland, Denmark, United Kingdom, Ireland, France Portugal and Spain. The initial list of emails was obtained through the web page of the European Environmental Agency. Given the low rate of responses obtained, partially because the email addresses provided by the national authorities were those of institutions (i.e. Museum of Natural History, etc.) instead of the managers themselves, it was decided to obtain the contact details of the managers one by one. This was solved by using the available partner contact details and the attendance to Conventions, Expert Conferences in Europe, such as the ECSA Conference “Estuarine Restoration: From theory to practice and back”, which was held in Antwerp in 2016 or the Workshop “Embracing Estuaries– Management of Natura 2000 sites in Estuaries and Sea Ports”, managed by Elbe Habitat Foundation, held in September 2016. Once the mails were obtained, the survey was resent to more than 50 managers of Natura sites in order to obtain as much information as possible.

Results from the survey were obtained and synthesized. Briefly, a total of 39 Natura 2000 sites with estuaries from 7 countries answered the survey.

SAC visits: The SAC visits were organized by FIHAC although are slightly delayed with respect to the planned schedule (October 2017) but will be completed in 2018 before the end of the action. This delay is partially due to the difficulties to find the partners needed to help in the organization of the technical visits and events and to the SAC selection process itself. Besides, this action was deliberately delayed so a more specific approach of the actions that are taking place to restore the conservation status of the habitat and species in the CONVIVE LIFE actionable areas can be explained to the visited SAC managers and stakeholders. This delay does not affect the action itself or other actions.

After a selection process, four sites have been already selected and contacted, one in Portugal, one in the Netherlands, one in United Kingdom and another one in Spain. The first Natura 2000 site selected to be included in the **CONVIVE transnational group** is **Ría de Aveiro (Portugal)**. This site together with **river Mondego estuary (RAMSAR site)** cover a large area that includes similar restoration solutions (reopening of confined areas) and difficulties in the management of the sites than those found in our estuaries that can be a good basis to share experiences, debate and learn. The closeness of the territory, the similar habitat and species, pressures, uses and FIHAC’s good relationship with members of the scientific community were also a key point in the selection of the site.

To plan the venue in Portugal, we have contacted our colleague João M. Neto from the University of Coimbra that has kindly agreed to help us in the organization of the CONVIVE session. Our main goal is to join stakeholders in a one-day CONVIVE session in which explanatory meetings and debates will take place. This session will be accompanied by technical visits to the estuaries with local and regional managers to experience the different restoration actions performed in the estuaries, the sustainable development of activities and to identify the conflicts and interactions among users and the management solutions. The venue is planned to be carry out at the end of January 2018 in Laboratory MAREFOZ in **Figueira da Foz**.

The second Natura 2000 sites selected to be included in the **CONVIVE transnational group** are **Oosterschelde** and the **Westerschelde** in **The Netherlands**. This area includes interesting restoration solutions such as the Perkpolder & Rammegors restoration projects, among others. So far, we have contacted our colleague Tjeerd Bowma from the NIOZ Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research that has kindly agreed to help us in the organization of the CONVIVE session. The venue is planned to be carried out on March 2018 at **NIOZ (Yerseke)**. The programme of the visits to the SAC (explanatory meetings, debate and technical visits) will be similar to those planned in Portugal.

The Natura 2000 site selected in UK is the Humber estuary. This estuarine area shows interesting cases of ecoengineering with ec hydrology. We have contacted Mike Elliot from the Hull University that has kindly agreed to help us in the organization of the CONVIVE networking session.

Lastly, two Natura 2000 sites in Spain have been also selected: Doñana (Huelva) and Urdaibai (País Vasco), where several action of invasive alien species removal have been implemented (some of them in the framework of LIFE projects)

Action F3. Preparation of an external independent audit

Progress: Not started according to schedule.

At this point, **AOB auditores** was selected to undertake the final audit of the project. The audit will begin at the closure of the project.

Action F4. Preservation Plan after the LIFE Project

Progress: Not started according to schedule.

The Preservation plan is not defined yet but it will have two main objectives: **1) to define the future conservation strategy** and **2) to disseminate the results derived from the project**.

1) Definition of the Preservation Plan after the LIFE Project

This document will preliminary include a summary of the most relevant results of the project, specifically of those actions that are replicable in other Spanish or European estuaries. It will also provide a list of the priority conservation actions for the habitats of community interest to be performed after the LIFE Project, a monitoring plan for these actions and the networking with the relevant authorities. It will also include a proposal for a conservation strategy which guarantees the maintenance of the results achieved and the dissemination and impact of the project results.

2) Dissemination actions after the LIFE Project

An independent document including the dissemination strategy after the LIFE Project will be developed. This document will summarize the different dissemination actions needed to publish the implemented methodologies and the achieved results. Among these dissemination actions, special relevance will be given to:

- The maintenance and update of the project webpage
- The dissemination of the project results through specialized media (scientific journals, environmental dissemination magazines (e.g. *Locustella*), etc).

- The dissemination of the project results through the assistance to National and International Congresses and Conferences, and to experts meetings.

3.3 MAIN DEVIATIONS, PROBLEMS AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS IMPLEMENTED

The main problems found in the project at this point (31/12/2017) are described below:

Action A3:

Santa Olaja Mill dike construction Project: Problem → the Consejería de Educación, Cultura y Deporte of the Cantabria Government requirements and the dike status. We could not perform the alternative 2 proposed in the construction project due to the Cantabrian Government's refusal to remove the basal stone slab under the cutwaters to increase the incoming tidal inflow due to the cultural value of the mill and the conservation status of the dike so the Alternative 1 was finally selected and carried out on October 2017. In the case that this approach do not solve as predicted the eutrophization inside the lagoon, ARNUERO has agreed to continue with the hydrodynamic restoration actions in the lagoon out of the project. The Municipality have noted that the mill dike has water filtrations near the footpath (eastern margin of the dike) that are increasing in size and will affect the carrying capacity of the dike. If necessary, the Municipality will undertake to restore the mill dike in a near future (5-10 years) and open a new gate to improve water renewal inside the pond. **These works are not included in the proposal.**

Joyel channel construction Project: Problem → The Coastal Authority requirements (they asked us for the concession of the dike) and the state of the Soano dike flapgate (the gate was bricked up) and the extracosts works were not budgeted. To overcome the problem, a new alternative was selected. The alternative was to restore Joyel channel functioning through cleaning of the channel bed and the rehabilitation of the water control structure. This restoration will also improve the water control inside Soano Lagoon as programmed in the action and it is according to Management Plan proposal of the lagoon as a result of the action C4.

Green filter construction Project: Problem → the situation of the fish farm during 2016 and its final acquisition by Naturix S.L. in January 2017 caused a delay in the construction project definition. Changes in the design of the green filter (from a sub-surface water flux system to a state-of-the-art floating system) were also agreed to adapt the filter to the discharge channel configuration and to Naturix S.L. requirements. These changes will not affect expected results. Moreover, the system finally selected is more efficient and will reduce in a greater extent the nutrient loads to the estuary. This system has less maintenance, generates less wastes and the clogging rate of the discharge channel is lower.

All these difficulties caused a small delay in the construction projects completion. This delay did not affect significantly the start of actions C2 and C3.

Action C1:

The delay in the exchange of a partnership agreement with CGPYDR. This fact delayed the subcontracting of the *Baccharis halimifolia* control works. Finally, in 2017 the CGPYDR started the *Baccharis halimifolia* control works subcontracting process. An intensification of the works was carried out in 2017 to compensate the delay in the beginning of the action.

The partnership agreement with CGPYDR have already been signed.

Action C2:

Construction works: Problem → Coastal Authority requirements caused a delay in the start of Ría del Capitán dike and Joyel channel works. These works were planned to end in August 2017, however they are expected to end in the first quarter of 2018.

Coastal Authority required the application for the concession of Ría del Capitán dike to be able to carry out the construction works. This process will take around 8 months and was not considered in the CONVIVE LIFE project proposal. The application for the concession of Ría del Capitán dike was carried out by the Municipality of Valdáliga in June 2017 after approval by the local government board. This application is already in progress and pending on the resolution.

Similar requirements that were not considered in the Project Proposal were requested by Coastal Authority to perform The Joyel Channel restoration. This time, this authority required an authorization or concession for the occupation of the Public Maritime-terrestrial domain to reinstall the control structure (weir) in Joyel Channel. The authorization process may last about 2 months while the concession process may take 8 months. To move forward the start of the construction works in Joyel channel, ARNUERO will apply for the authorization for the occupation of the Public Maritime-terrestrial domain in Joyel Channel and for the concession of the channel at the same time. This way the authorization needed to start the construction works will be obtained in about two months and the concession afterwards. The application was approved in the Plenary Session of ARNUERO that was held on October 23rd, 2017. All the construction works will start as soon as we get the authorizations from Coastal Authority.

Technical documents needed to fulfil these requirements were developed by FIHAC and **were not included in the CONVIVE LIFE project.**

The delay of this action may delay the start of actions D1 and D2. Despite this delay, actions D1 and D2 are expected to be completed as programmed. If necessary, the delivery of the deliverables for these actions will be slightly delayed. This small delay will not affect significantly to other actions.

Action C3:

Green filter: Problem → The past administrative situation of the fish farm. This situation delayed almost 1 year the construction project definition. Despite this fact, the construction works are only slightly delayed and will be finished in January 2018 (End date scheduled: October, 2017). This small delay will not affect significantly to other actions.

Action C4:

Joyel and Victoria Plans: Problem → The writing of the plans took more time than expected caused the delay of this action.

Tina Menor Plan: Problem → The past administrative situation of the fish farm and the definition of the new exploitation model of the fish farm and lagoons delayed the definition of the measures of the management Plan.

This delay does not affect other actions and will not affect the action completion. The Biodiversity management Plans are expected to be approved by the Board of the Natural Park (Joyel and Victoria Plans) and Naturix S.L. in the first half of 2018.

Actions D1 and D2: Preliminary design of the monitoring programs is completed. Field works started on November 2017 after the restoration action of the Santa Olaja Mill and the removal of macroalgae blooms in the Santa Olaja lagoon.

Action F2:

Delay in the SAC visits: The visits to the SAC were expected to be finished in October 2017, however, the visits were slightly delayed and will be completed by first half 2018. Two visits are already organised and will be completed before March 2018 (Portugal and the Netherlands). This delay is partially due to the difficulties to find the partners needed to help in the organization of the technical visits and events and to the SAC selection process itself. Besides, this action has been deliberately delayed so a more specific approach of the actions that are taking place to restore the conservation status of the habitat and species in the CONVIVE LIFE actionable areas can be explained to the visited SAC managers and stakeholders. This delay does not affect the action itself or other actions.

4. COMMENTS ON THE FINANCIAL REPORT

During the current year, a Mid Term report has been elaborated containing all the administrative, financing and technical information from the start of the project until 31st August 2017.

In this sense and regarding the first pre-financing payment made at the beginning of the project it is assured that the amount transferred has been duly spent (238.621, 80€). Thus, on the Mid-Term Report it has been requested to the Agency the second pre-financing.

Explanation about the situation of the project (31st August 2017):

In general terms there has been a low rate of expenses presented according to the time spent. Nevertheless, this is due to some causes and factors explained and summarized next.

In relation to the **Conservation Actions and Building Restoration activities (C actions)**, there has been a considerably delay on its start. However, during the elaboration of the Mid-Term Report these actions had just been started and once they finished it would be possible to certify the corresponding costs on the next Progress Report foreseen on June 2018. One of the causes has been the delay on the validation of the Partnership Agreement by the CGPYDR associated beneficiary considering that this process is taking longer due to administrative processes and red tape issues. Moreover, all the permits and coastal licenses requested to the corresponding authorities have also taken longer than expected and this issue is slightly delaying the start of those actions.

The reason for the high amount certified on **“Personnel costs”** is due to the work elaborated for the **preparation actions (A actions)** considering that the activities for updating the information of biological communities, the hydrodynamic characterization, the design of environmental restoration construction works and the elaboration of environmental impact assessment has taken longer as a result of all the hard consultancy work made by personnel allocated in order to collect, revise, elaborate, design and describe this preparatory information.

An important issue related to this cost category is the dedication of staff not initially foreseen on the project for certain beneficiaries (FIHAC, COPSESA, SEO) and those who are in the payroll system at the moment of the start date of the project.

The low rate on the **“Travel and Subsistence”** costs is due to the fact that all the actions for doing the networking of the project and attending congresses and conferences (F2 action) have not already started at this moment. Nevertheless, this scenario will change in one year period.

Regarding the low cost currently allocated to the “**Consumables**” category, this amount will be increased in the next report since the Photography Contest finished on October 2017. Besides, it is foreseen an increase in the purchasing of laboratory equipment in order to be used for the **monitoring activities (D actions)** on the next period. Moreover, we remark that the delay on the starting of conservation and restauration actions has delayed consequently the starting of the monitoring actions (D actions).

In relation to the “**Other costs**” category, on the next period, an increase of the amount expensed due to the elaboration of dissemination and communication actions is foreseen. In this sense, an entity in charge of these activities has been procured in order to elaborate certain dissemination material and communication actions. Another cost that will rise the cost on this category will be the procurement for the Audit Service foreseen at the end of the project.

4.1. Estimation of person-days used per action

The following information provides an outline and an explanation of the estimation of person-days dedicated to all the actions that correspond with the effort made during the project:

On the preparation Actions (A) there has been a high rate of -due to the amount of work assigned to update the information of biological communities, the hydrodynamic characterization, the design of environmental restauration construction works and the elaboration of environmental impact assessment.

On the other hand, the **Conservation Actions and Building Restoration activities (C actions)** has reached a low rate because of the delay in the start date of these actions and other type of red tape issues. On the next period, the spent-days will increase due to the recently start of those actions.

The lowest rate on spent-days concerns **monitoring activities (D actions)**. This is due to the delay in the start date of the C Actions, which are linked to the D actions. Therefore, on the next period this figure would reach a higher percentage. Currently, we consider the spent-days for the **E and F Actions** adequate since during this period, dissemination actions like the “CONVIVE NATURA technical sessions”, the “CO-EDUCA workshops” and certain diffusion issues (website, roll-ups, leaflets, merchandising, etc.) have been duly carried out. Finally, and in relation to the coordination actions, the rate obtained is appropriate since all the coordination tasks have been developed constantly and efficiently.